



Katharine Pujol's Personal Statement

Without the support from JJCF I wouldn't have been able to grow the way I did professionally at Alterna and simultaneously achieve the impact I have made with entrepreneurs in a developing country. When I first arrived at Alterna I wasn't sure exactly how it would shape my career path. By working directly with entrepreneurs at all different stages and in all facets of business I was able to cultivate my passion for supporting social entrepreneur ecosystem growth in a developing economy. Alterna itself felt very much like a start-up where I was thrown into all sorts of projects from setting up Salesforce to building all sorts of financial tools to advising entrepreneurs on ways to grow their sales. Having so much responsibility really enabled me to take command of projects individually and in team settings, make and learn from mistakes, and really develop a way of diagnosing problems and efficiently figuring out solutions. I grew personally by getting to know all the other fellows from around the world and their previous work experience, which has definitely given me new perspective on my new career path. The entrepreneurs I worked with taught me to be patient, how to ask purposeful questions, and to be both flexible and adaptable to constantly changing conditions. I feel like I have changed more in the past 6 months than in the past 5 years. Other than my personal growth I truly feel that I have contributed to Alterna's growth as well as its impact on the communities it works with from the organic farmer we helped crowdfund a greenhouse to the gourmet food service who donates a majority of its profits to an HIV awareness campaigns. JJCF enabled me to pursue my new found passion in social enterprise and impact investing and I am excited for what is now in store for me, Alterna, and Guatemala's entrepreneur ecosystem in the future!